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SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

COUNTRY Korea

SUBJECT Postwar Operation of Railways in North Korea

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DATE OF INFO.

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1. The North Korean railway system after the war was in rather poor operating condition, and little repair or new construction has been undertaken. Because of the frequent accidents resulting from old equipment and careless operation, some slight improvements were made in 1948, such as replacement of old passenger cars with newer models, rewards of food for engineers maintaining regular schedules, and enforcement of more stringent safety regulations. On the other hand, some tracks were removed, including one side, approximately 43.7 kilometers long, of the double track on the Seoul-Sinuiju main line between the stations of Yehyon (126-26, 38-00) and Manch'onjom (126-24, 38-20)."
2. Electric locomotives are operating on the following lines:
 - Chorwon (127-12, 38-14) to Kungangsan (127-22, 38-18) line; before the Japanese surrender on the entire line, but since then only on the section Chorwon to Changdo-ri (127-40, 38-30).
 - Seoul-Wonsan line, but only on the section, about 53.9 kilometers long, between Pokkye-ri (127-16, 38-26) and Wosan-ni (127-29, 38-50).
 - Pyeongwon line, from Yangdok (126-54, 39-10) to Ch'onul-li (126-48, 39-20), a distance of 27 kilometers.
 - Manpo main line between Kujang-dong (126-02, 39-52) and Pusong-dong (126-16, 40-04), a distance of 40 kilometers; the locomotives use 600 volt electrical supply.
3. An improvement in operation of steam locomotives followed the discovery of better quality coal at the Aoji-dong (130-25, 42-30) mine in North Hamgyong Province. Efforts are being made to increase the output of this mine.

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Approved For Release 2008/10/16 : CIA-RDP80-01060A000100010001-6
Next Review Date: 2008

Document No. 03
No Change To: [redacted]
☒ Declassified
Class. Change To: TS S C
Auth.: [redacted]
Date: 2/6/98
RDP 82-00487R0038000300032

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4. Repair facilities are quite inadequate, although after the war the locomotive factories in Chongjin, Hamhung, Wonsan, Pyongyang, and other centers were restored to action. Most repair work, because of the shortage of parts, has to be done by cannibalizing other locomotives. There is also a shortage of colored glass for signal lights. North Korean authorities have been trying to procure supplies through purchase from South Korea and foreign countries.

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5. A higher railway school was established in Pyongyang to train railway technicians, in a one-year course. Specially apt students of pro-Soviet orientation are trained at government expense or may even be sent to the USSR for advanced training. Plans are under way for the establishment of similar schools at Hamhung and Chongjin.
6. The deteriorating condition of railway lines is exemplified by an accident which occurred on 22 June 1949. Elements of an unidentified cavalry battalion (approximately forty men and fifty horses) were in transit from Wonsan to Kangyang (128-58, 38-04) when their orders were changed, and they entrained for movement to Haeju (125-42, 38-02). The train, consisting of four freight cars and two locomotives, overturned as it was moving north to Wonsan, on a bridge between P'ongch'on (127-54, 38-54) and Kojo (127-54, 38-58). The accident was caused by the washing away of four piers on the right side of the bridge as a result of heavy rains. Only twelve men and seven horses survived, all with severe injuries. Traffic on the line was suspended for forty days, during which time a wooden bridge was to be built to replace the concrete structure.

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Comment. [redacted] this removal began in November 1948 and was completed by February 1949.

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